
LESSON 3

MEF FIRE SUPPORT IN THE OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

It is firepower, and firepower that arrives at the right time and place that counts in modern war.

--B. H. Liddell Hart
Thoughts on War, 1944

...Air support for counterfire will be critical to the success of the Division assault breach. My concept is for the air to act as our "deep" artillery. Air assets will primarily engage artillery units beyond the range of our artillery.

--Major General J. M. Myatt, 1991

Introduction

Purpose

This lesson

wExamines the aspects of Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) fire support fundamentals, coordination requirements, and employment consideration in the offense and defense

wProvides insight on Marine Corps artillery organization and how it organizes for combat

wIntroduces the Army Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS) and explains how it will enhance future fire support coordination at the service, joint, and multinational levels

Why Study Fire Support?

wFires are among the most responsive and dynamic tools the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) commander has to shape the battlefield, impose his will on the enemy, and strip the opposing commander of the initiative.

wEffective MEF level fires depend on the force's targeting effort which is, in turn, an outgrowth of wargaming and staff planning. Success stems from a commander who understands and integrates this entire process.

Continued on next page

Introduction, Continued

Relationship to Other Instruction	The information in this lesson complements and expands the concepts introduced in lesson 9 of the <i>Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF)</i> (8804). An integral part of MEF and joint and combined operations, fire support and coordination fundamentals described in this lesson generally apply to amphibious, as well as offensive and defensive operations.
--	--

Study Time	This lesson, including the issues for consideration, requires approximately 4 hours of study.
-------------------	---

Educational Objectives

Battlespace Function	Examine the concepts of fires as a battlespace function and how fires can be integrated in joint operations. [JPME 2(d) and 5(c)]
Fire Support	Examine the concept of fire support at the Corps, MEF, and subordinate unit levels. [JPME 1(a)]
Coordination	Understand the principles of fire support coordination (FSC). [JPME 1(e)]
Coordination Agencies	Comprehend the role of FSC agencies resident within the MEF and their role in joint and combined operations. [JPME 3(c)]
AFATDS as a Joint Resource	Examine AFATDS as a joint resource and the role it will play in fire support coordination in the future. [JPME 5(b) and 5(c)]
Marine Artillery Organization	Comprehend Marine artillery organization for combat in support of offensive and defensive operations.
JPME Areas/ Objectives/Hours (accounting data)	1/a/0.5 1/e/0.5 2/d/0.2 3/c/0.3 5/b/0.2 5/c/0.3

Historical Background

Introduction

Since its introduction to the battlefield in the 14th century, artillery has been a deadly instrument of war. During the 20th century, advances in technology and tactics have made artillery and other elements of fire support the dominate force on the modern battlefield. Weapons have become more accurate, faster firing, and increasingly lethal.

Artillery Use in the Twentieth Century

World War I was characterized by massive artillery barrages and the first use of aerial bombardment. During World War II, fire support coordination was developed into a fine art. The U.S. Army instituted methods to call-for-fire onto a single target from several firing batteries that were not located together. The Marine Corps further refined their concept of a combined arms team in the island battles of the Pacific.

The American emphasis on fire support not only helped win battles, but reduced casualties. In the years since World War II, U.S. Armed Forces maintained their focus on fire support as a means of shaping the battlespace and achieving victory.

Shaping the Battlespace with Fire Support

As an example of shaping the battlespace, the MEF commander may direct fire on an enemy position while maneuvering his infantry into a position to attack an exposed flank. The enemy commander would then have to either move his forces to meet the attack while exposing them to the fire. Or, leave his troops under cover to minimize casualties to the fire while sacrificing the ability to reinforce the exposed flank.

Discussion

Decisive Operations

MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, states that to maximize combat power, all available resources must be used to its best advantage.

wPart of maximizing means decisive operations--actions designed to conduct a war, a campaign, or a major phase of military activity.

wBesides maximizing resources, the effective coordination of all elements of fire support and their integration with the MEF's scheme of maneuver in the offense, or its plan of defense, is vital to accomplishing the MEF's mission.

Combined Arms

Combined arms is the full integration of arms in such a way that to counteract one, the enemy must become more vulnerable to another. The enemy is posed with not just a problem, but with a dilemma--a no-win situation.

Combined arms is accomplished through tactics and techniques at the lower levels, and task organizations at higher levels. Marine Corps commanders take advantage of the complementary characteristics of different types of units and enhance both mobility and firepower.

Shaping Operations: Definition and Purpose

The single battle concept is built around the complementary concepts of shaping and decisive operations. Shaping operations develop the conditions required if further operations are to be successful.

Shaping operations aim to dictate the terms of combat and keep the threat off-balance, thereby increasing the enemy's friction and creating an environment that adversely affects his critical vulnerabilities (CVs).

Continued on next page

Discussion, Continued

Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS) In fire support operations, advances in weaponry have necessitated a new automated system, AFATDS.

The AFATDS is a joint Army/Marine Corps program to replace the Initial Fire Support Automated System (IFSAS). It employs a building block approach to incrementally incorporate automation into fire support functionality.

AFATDS Purposes wAs a multiservice, integrated battlefield management and decision support system, it assists the commander in the planning, delivery, and coordination of supporting arms.

wAFATDS satisfies the fire support command and control requirements of the Marine Corps. All echelons of MAGTF will receive the AFATDS and it will be employed from the AAVC-7, LAV-C2, and Advanced AAV.

wCommand and control (C²) systems needed to support joint operations must provide interoperability and information across the entire, but dispersed, force.

Required Readings

FM/FMFRP Readings

wFM 100-15, *Corps Operations*, Chapter 3, pp. 3-8 to 3-15. Find this reading in the *FM/FMFRP Readings* (8800), pp. 77 to 84. This reading gives an overview of fire support and the types of support listed below:

wField Artillery
wElectronic Countermeasures (ECM)
wTactical Air
wNuclear Weapons
wChemical Weapons

wFM 90-31, *Army and Marine Corps Integration in Joint Operations*, chapter V, pp. V-7 to V-17. Find this reading in the *FM/FMFRP Readings* (8800), pp. 39 to 49. This reading discusses fire support operations, coordination agencies, and coordinators. It depicts various fire support operation organizations and their relationships.

FMFM Readings

wFMFM 2-7, *Fire Support in MAGTF Operations*, chapters 2, 3, and 4. Find this reading in the *FMFM Readings* (8800), pp. 147 to 168. Chapter 2 is an in-depth study on artillery. Chapter 3 deals with the fundamentals for employment of fire support. Chapter 4 address the principles and planning of fire support.

wFMFM 2-7-1, *Fire Support Coordination by the MAGTF Command Element*, chapters 1, 3, and 4. Find this reading in the *FMFM Readings* (8800), pp. 175 to 190. Chapter 1 is an introduction to fire support coordination. Chapter 3 addresses the MAGTF Command Element's (CE) function in the realm of fire support planning. Chapter 4 emphasizes the role of the MAGTF CE when dealing with fire support coordination in operations.

wFMFM 6-9, *Marine Artillery Support*, chapters 11 and 12. Find this reading in the *FMFM Readings* (8800), pp. 421 to 445. Chapter 11 discusses offensive operations and Chapter 12 addresses defensive operations.

Continued on next page

Required Readings, Continued

***MAGTF
Operations
Readings***

Boutelle, Steven W. and Filak, Ronald. *"AFATDS: The Fire Support Window to the 21st Century."* *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 1996, pp. 16 through 21. Find this reading in the *MAGTF Operations Readings*, Annex B, pp. B-3 through B-8. This article discusses where we (the Marine Corps and the U.S. Army) were, where we are, and where we are going in terms of fire support.

For Further Study

Supplemental Readings

The following readings are **not** required. They are provided as recommended sources of additional information about topics in this lesson that may interest you. They will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

wJoint Pub 3-02, *Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations*.

wJoint Pub 3-02.1, *Joint Doctrine for Landing Force Operations*.

wFMFM 6-18, *Techniques and Procedures for Fire Support Coordination*.

wFMFM 5-4, *Close Air Support and Close-In Fire Support*.

wFM 6-20, *Fire Support in the AirLand Battle*.

wFM 6-20-10/MCRP 3-1.6.14, *Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for the Process*.

wFM 6-20-30, *Fire Support for Corps and Division Operations*.

Issues for Consideration

Battlespace Function	Describe the concepts of fires as a battlespace function. How can fires be integrated in joint operations? How will AFATDS facilitate the integration of fires with the other battlespace functions in joint operations?
Fire Support	Describe the concept of fire support at the Corps, MEF, and subordinate unit levels.
Coordination and Planning	What are the principles of fire support coordination? What are the key actions of the MAGTF CE in fire support planning? What role will AFATDS play in fire support coordination in the future?
Artillery Organization and Support	Describe the Marine artillery organization for combat in support of offensive and defensive operations. What are some of the specific ways artillery supports the offense and defense?